

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 5

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alejo, Allen, Ammiano, Atkins, Block, Blumenfield, Bonilla, Bradford, Brownley, Buchanan, Butler, Campos, Carter, Davis, Dickinson, Eng, Feuer, Fong, Fuentes, Furutani, Gordon, Hall, Hayashi, Roger Hernández, Hill, Hueso, Huffman, Lara, Ma, Mendoza, Mitchell, Monning, Pan, John A. Pérez, V. Manuel Pérez, Portantino, Solorio, Swanson, Wieckowski, Williams, and Yamada)

February 10, 2011

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 5—Relative to transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 5, as amended, Bonnie Lowenthal. Transportation revenues.

This measure would request the President and the Congress of the United States to consider and enact legislation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of the collection process for a transportation revenue source based on vehicle miles traveled, in order to facilitate the creation of a reliable and steady transportation funding mechanism for the maintenance and improvement of surface transportation infrastructure.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The primary source of funding for transportation
- 2 in the United States is derived from a variety of excise and sales
- 3 taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel collected by either the federal
- 4 government, or state or local governments; and

1 WHEREAS, The excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel (fuel
2 tax) is not indexed to inflation or any other factor, and as a result,
3 its value erodes with inflation over time; and

4 WHEREAS, While the demand for transportation continues to
5 grow, the value of the fuel tax is diminishing, and is therefore
6 becoming an increasingly inadequate source of revenue to fund
7 transportation projects and programs; and

8 WHEREAS, Aside from inflation, there is a need for the creation
9 of supplements or alternatives to the fuel tax as a source of revenue
10 for transportation projects and programs due to a combination of
11 other factors, including the declining supplies of conventional
12 petroleum-based fuels, increasing numbers of vehicles powered
13 by nonpetroleum-based fuels, and increasing numbers of
14 fuel-efficient vehicles; and

15 WHEREAS, There is growing disparity in the revenue needed
16 to fund the protection and improvement of our transportation
17 system and the revenue available for those purposes; and

18 WHEREAS, Vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) fees have received
19 increasing attention in recent years as a potential supplement or
20 alternative to the fuel tax; and

21 WHEREAS, The most recent multiyear federal transportation
22 authorizations act, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient
23 Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU),
24 established the National Surface Transportation Policy and
25 Revenue Study Commission (commission) to examine the
26 condition and future needs of the nation's surface transportation
27 system, as well as short- and long-term alternatives to the fuel tax;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, The commission, in its December 2007 report,
30 recommended consideration of a VMT fee; and

31 WHEREAS, Implementing a VMT fee would involve a number
32 of operational, technological, and institutional challenges, including
33 determining the method for calculating the mileage driven, the
34 process by which mileage data is transmitted to a tax collection
35 agency, contingencies to address potential equipment failures,
36 adequate privacy protections, and a strategy for transitioning from
37 the fuel tax to a new method of highway user payment; and

38 WHEREAS, Data on deployment of a VMT fee exists through
39 the State of Oregon's recent VMT pilot program; now, therefore,
40 be it

1 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
2 *California, jointly,* That the President and the Congress of the
3 United States are respectfully requested to consider and enact
4 legislation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of the
5 collection process for a transportation revenue source based on
6 vehicle miles traveled, in order to facilitate the creation of a reliable
7 and steady transportation funding mechanism for the maintenance
8 and improvement of surface transportation infrastructure; and be
9 it further

10 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
11 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
12 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
13 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
14 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
15 States.